

IN THE CLAIMS:

1-9. (canceled)

10. (currently amended) A flexible footwear traction system oriented in a normal plane comprising a lightweight forefoot region constructed of a relatively inflexible material having multiple spikes; a lightweight heel region constructed of a relatively inflexible material having multiple spikes, the heel region including a heel piece on which the bottom of the wearer's heel would be placed, a heel support foldably mounted to the heel piece and being movable to and from a generally vertical orientation extending upwardly and outwardly from the heel piece to support the wearer's heel during use and to and from a generally horizontal orientation folded toward the heel piece for compactness during non-use; the heel support comprising a pair of heel bales each of which has an inward projection extending through a respective opening in the heel piece for permitting the heel bales to pivot, each of the openings being sufficiently larger than its respective heel bale to permit each of the heel bales to selectively move up and down in its respective opening whereby the heel support may be folded toward the heel piece during non-use and whereby the heel support may also be positioned at the generally vertical orientation of the heel support, the heel support including stop structure to limit the pivotal movement of the bales to a stop position at the generally

vertical orientation of the heel support; a flexible linkage made of a springy material between the forefoot region and the heel region that allows the forefoot region and the heel region to be readily flexed relative to each other at least 20 degrees from the normal plane without damaging or permanently deforming the system; and a strap or harness attachment adapted to secure the traction system to flexible footwear.

11. (canceled)

12. (currently amended) The flexible footwear traction system of claim [[11]] 10 wherein each of the heel bales terminates in an inturned end which comprises the inward projection, each inward projection being disposed to contact the underside of the heel piece when in the stop position, and the openings in the heel piece being slots to permit sliding movement of the inturned ends in the slots.

13. (currently amended) The flexible footwear traction system of claim 12 wherein the heel bales are rotatable to [[a]] the stop position at the vertical orientation which is at an angle of 95° - 110° from the plane of the heel piece.

14. (previously presented) The flexible footwear traction system of claim 10 wherein the forefoot region and the heel region are made of plastic.

15. (previously presented) The flexible footwear traction

system of claim 10 wherein the traction system has a weight of 0.7 pounds or less per foot unit.

16. (previously presented) The flexible footwear traction system of claim 10 wherein the forefoot region and the heel region readily flex relative to each other at least 45 degrees from the normal plane without damaging or permanently deforming the system.

17. (previously presented) The flexible footwear traction system of claim 10 wherein the forefoot region and the heel region readily flex relative to each other at least 90 degrees from the normal plane without damaging or permanently deforming the system.

18. (currently amended) ~~[[A]] The flexible footwear traction system oriented in a normal plane comprising a lightweight forefoot region constructed of a relatively inflexible material having multiple spikes, of claim 24 wherein all of the spikes at the forefoot region being are generally perpendicular to the forefoot region, a lightweight heel region constructed of a relatively inflexible material having multiple spikes, a flexible linkage made of a springy material between the forefoot region and the heel region that allows the forefoot region and the heel region to be readily flexed relative to each other at least 20 degrees from the normal plane without damaging or permanently deforming the system, and a strap or harness attachment adapted~~

~~to secure the traction system to flexible footwear.~~

19. (previously presented) The flexible footwear traction system of claim 18 wherein the spikes at the heel region are generally perpendicular to the heel region.

20. (previously presented) The flexible footwear traction system of claim 18 wherein the forefoot region and the heel region are made of plastic.

21. (previously presented) The flexible footwear traction system of claim 18 wherein the traction system has a weight of 0.7 pounds or less per foot unit.

22. (previously presented) The flexible footwear traction system of claim 18 wherein the forefoot region and the heel region readily flex relative to each other at least 45 degrees from the normal plane without damaging or permanently deforming the system.

23. (previously presented) The flexible footwear traction system of claim 18 wherein the forefoot region and the heel region readily flex relative to each other at least 90 degrees from the normal plane without damaging or permanently deforming the system.

24. (previously presented) A flexible footwear traction system oriented in a normal plane comprising a lightweight forefoot region constructed of a relatively inflexible material having multiple spikes; a lightweight heel region constructed of

a relatively inflexible material having multiple spikes; a flexible linkage made of a springy material between the forefoot region and the heel region that allows the forefoot region and the heel region to be readily flexed relative to each other at least 20 degrees from the normal plane without damaging or permanently deforming the system, the flexible linkage being a multilayer extender bar wherein the layers are mounted together while allowing relative movement between the individual layers; and a strap or harness attachment adapted to secure the traction system to flexible footwear.

25. (previously presented) The flexible footwear traction system of claim 24 wherein the forefoot region and the heel region are made of plastic.

26. (previously presented) The flexible footwear traction system of claim 24 wherein the traction system has a weight of 0.7 pounds or less per foot unit.

27. (previously presented) The flexible footwear traction system of claim 24 wherein the forefoot region and the heel region readily flex relative to each other at least 45 degrees from the normal plane without damaging or permanently deforming the system.

28. (previously presented) The flexible footwear traction system of claim 24 wherein the forefoot region and the heel region readily flex relative to each other at least 90 degrees

from the normal plane without damaging or permanently deforming the system.

29. (New) The flexible footwear traction system of claim 24 wherein the strap or harness attachment includes straps and a strap guide that acts to keep the straps from shifting to an insecure position.

30. (New) The flexible footwear traction system of claim 29 including at least four strap anchors attached to the forefoot region, the straps including at least two individually length-adjustable straps, each strap attached between two or more of the strap anchors and the strap guide; and wherein the straps are adapted to be adjusted to position the strap guide in a secure position over a wearer's forefoot region.

31. (New) The flexible footwear traction system of claim 30 wherein the strap guide includes multiple openings therein and the straps attach between the strap anchors and the openings in the strap guide.

32. (New) The flexible footwear traction system of claim 24 wherein a spring clip is attached to either the forefoot region or the heel region adapted to adjustably anchor the extender bar in relative position between the forefoot region and the heel region; wherein the extender bar has a length; wherein the spring clip is adapted to actuate in a direction essentially perpendicular to the length of the extender bar; and wherein the

spring clip is positioned to actuate away from the bottom surface of the traction device so that the position of the extender bar, the forefoot region, and the heel region can be adjusted relative to each other while the traction device is attached to the wearer's footwear.

33. (New) The flexible footwear traction system of claim 32 wherein the extender bar includes a series of openings formed along its length and the spring clip includes a protrusion adapted to engage at least one of the openings so as to maintain the position of the forefoot region and the heel region relative to each other.

34. (New) The flexible footwear traction system of claim 24 wherein the layers of the extender bar are made of metal.